

REMARKS

I. Overview

These remarks are set forth in response to the Non-Final Office Action mailed June 29, 2007. As this amendment has been timely filed within the three-month statutory period, neither an extension of time nor a fee is required. Presently, claims 1 through 13 are pending in the Patent Application. Claims 1, 3, 6 and 10 are independent in nature. In the Non-Final Office Action, claim 2 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph on the basis of a formality which formality has been corrected herein. Additionally, each of claims 1-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent Application Publication 2002/0142279 by Thean et al. In response, Applicants have amended claim 2 and otherwise respectfully traverse the rejections on the art.

II. The Applicant's Invention

The Applicants have invented a system, method and apparatus for dynamically restructuring a named collaborative context according to process steps enumerated in a workflow. In an embodiment of the Applicants' invention, a dynamically customizable collaborative context can be provided. Referred to as a named collaborative space, the dynamically customizable context can include an arrangement of collaborators in a membership defined to pursue a common objective through the use of a collaborative computing environment. The named collaborative space further can include one or more logical components, referred to as collaborative tools, and one or more resources for use by the collaborators through the tools in the collaborative environment. Importantly,

roles can be assigned to the collaborators which can limit or enhance access by the collaborators to different tools and resources in the named collaborative space.

The arrangement of collaborators, roles, tools and resources can be specified through a templating mechanism in which the arrangement can be defined in a template, named according to the common objective and processed at the time of creating the named collaborative space to produce the customized collaborative environment. Importantly, unlike the rigid nature of conventional customizable environments, in the named collaborative space of the present invention, any number and type of logical components can be included in the named collaborative space as specified by a template and rendered at run-time in order to produce a highly customizable and flexible collaborative computing environment.

Notably, the named collaborative space can be further extended to handle the changing requirements of a collaborative environment in the course of different states in a workflow. In this regard, a workflow can be defined for the collaborative environment which defines different arrangements of the collaborative components for different states of the workflow. A workflow engine can process the workflow according to the state of the named collaborative space in order to dynamically rearrange the combination of the collaborators in the membership, the respective roles for the membership, the tools deployed in the named collaborative space and the resources accessible for consumption in the named collaborative space.

III. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

A. Characterization of Thean

Thean teaches a collaborative learning system, method and computer program product supporting live, real time interaction between the audience and a presenter in a controlled learning environment. The collaborative learning system, method and computer program product provides a learning process that facilitates the transfer of expertise and knowledge using "push" technology. Specifically, the system includes a presenter subsystem, a backbone subsystem and an audience subsystem and the process includes pre-event, event and post-event stages.

During the pre-event stage, content can be created and optimized, and the producer can "coach" the presenter. During the event stage, the presenter and the producer using the presenter subsystem can push the event material to the audience located remotely at the audience subsystem via the backbone subsystem. In this regard, the event materials can include slides, streaming audio/video and interactive answers to questions and responses to audience feedback. Finally, during the post-event stage, follow-up materials can be prepared and presented to the audience, case studies can be analyzed and the results can be presented to the audience.

B Argument

At the outset, the Applicants note that the Examiner has chosen not to specifically apply relevant portions of Thean in rejecting claims 1 and 3 because, in the Examiner's words, "Claims 1-5 and 10-13 are similar in scope as of claims 6-9 and therefore claims 1-5 and 10-13 are rejected for the same reasons set forth above for claims 6-9". The Applicants take issue with the Examiner's course of conduct in this regard and note first

that the scope of claim 1 is not co-extensive with that of claim 6. To wit, claim 1 expressly requires a default arrangement for a workflow whereas claim 6 does not. Additionally, Applicants remind the Examiner of the Examiner's responsibility in providing a proper examination under 37 C.F.R. 104(c)(2) in which it is stated with emphasis added:

(2)In rejecting claims for want of novelty or for obviousness, the examiner must cite the best references at his or her command. When a reference is complex or shows or describes inventions other than that claimed by the applicant, **the particular part relied on must be designated as nearly as practicable. The pertinence of each reference, if not apparent, must be clearly explained and each rejected claim specified.**

Clearly in this instance the Examiner has not met this very basic requirement.

In any event, noting that Thean remains wholly silent on the concept of a workflow or workflow engine (the terms both being wholly absent from Thean), the Applicants will address the Examiner's rejections on the art in respect to claims 6-9.

Claim 6 as originally presented recites:

6. (Original) A method for dynamically restructuring a named collaborative context, the method comprising the steps of:
composing a first arrangement of collaborators, roles, tools and resources in a named collaborative space;
rendering said first arrangement in a user interface to permit collaborator interactions with said tools and resources;
monitoring said named collaborative space for changes in state; and,
responsive to a change in state in said named collaborative space, composing a second arrangement of collaborators, roles, tools and resources and rendering said second arrangement in place of said first arrangement.

As expressly recited, a second arrangement of collaborators, roles, tools and resource is composed and the second arrangement is rendered in place of the first arrangement **in response** to a change in state in the named collaborative space.

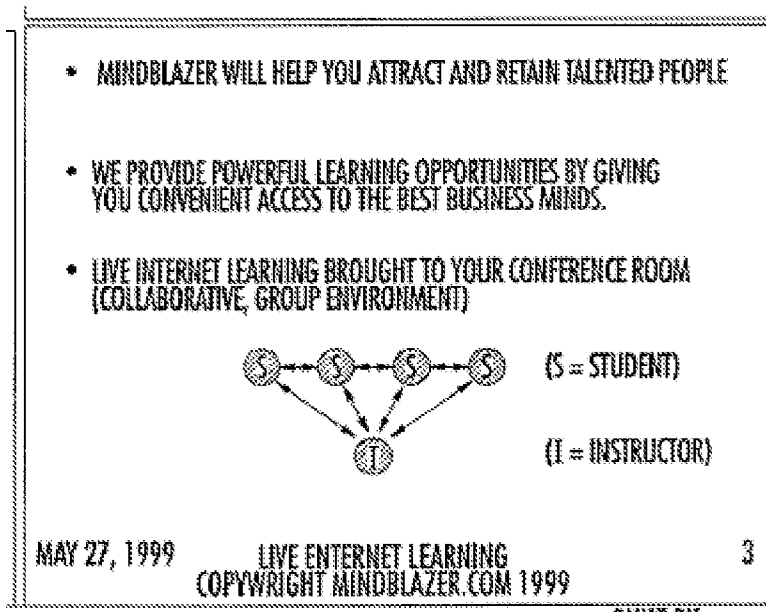
The Examiner points to Figure 5, Element 136 and Figure 12, Element 3 as the sole support for the proposition that Thean teaches the composition and replacement of

one arrangement with another in response to detecting a state change in a named collaborative space. A plain review of both Figures 5 and 12 reveal nothing of the sort.

Figure 5, Element 136 is reproduced as follows:



Likewise, Figure 12, Element 3 is reproduced as follows:



The Examiner has failed to show the operative "responsive to" through these two recited portions of Thean. Accordingly, the Examiner has failed to state a prima facie case of anticipation and these rejections must be withdrawn.

IV. Conclusion

The Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 112, 2nd paragraph owing to the amended claims and the foregoing remarks. The Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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/Steven M. Greenberg/

Steven M. Greenberg, Reg. No.: 44,725
Carey, Rodriguez, Greenberg & Paul, LLP
Customer No. 46321